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April 20, 2009

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The Honorable Steven Chu
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Chu:

We are conducting oversight of federal funding and support for large-scale or commercial deployment of carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technologies. We understand that over the past decade the Department of Energy (DOE) has undertaken a variety of activities, including a Carbon Sequestration Program, the FutureGen initiative, and other activities, to support the development and commercial deployment of CCS technologies. As the Congressional leadership is moving ahead very quickly on the issue of global warming, please provide the following information within two weeks from the date of this letter:

1. What types of projects has DOE funded over the past decade to support the commercial deployment of CCS technologies? Please describe the nature of those projects, the timeframe for deployment for each of those projects, and the estimated amounts of funding associated with each of those projects.
2. Prior to providing funding to support commercial deployment of CCS technologies, has DOE conducted reviews of those projects pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)? If not, please explain the legal basis for not conducting NEPA analyses. If so, please describe (i) the nature of the analyses conducted pursuant to NEPA; (ii) whether an environmental assessment (EA) or an environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared; and (iii) the length of time required for DOE to complete those NEPA analyses. Please include in this response a description of any reviews conducted by the department pursuant to NEPA in connection with the FutureGen project, and the amount of time required to complete those reviews.

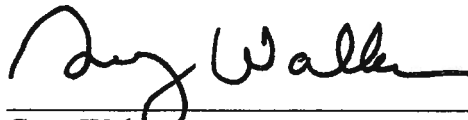
3. Prior to providing funding to support any commercial deployment of CCS technologies, has DOE also conducted reviews or analyses of those projects pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA)? If not, please explain the legal basis for not conducting ESA analyses. If so, please describe (i) the nature of the reviews or analyses conducted pursuant to the ESA; and (ii) the length of time required for DOE to complete those reviews. Please include in this response a description of any review conducted by the department pursuant to the ESA in connection with the FutureGen project, and the amount of time required to complete that review.
4. Based on DOE's experience in supporting the development of CCS technologies, what factors does DOE anticipate would affect the availability of CCS technology that could be commercially deployed and implemented in an electric generating unit or industrial source?
5. Based on DOE's experience in supporting the development of CCS, what is a realistic estimate of the amount of time that would be required for a federal agency to conduct all necessary environmental reviews under NEPA, ESA, and other environmental statutes prior to permitting or funding a commercial-scale CCS demonstration project?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations